

Tricky Evaluations

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AS MOST government analysts know, in the tedious process of winnowing useful intelligence from mounds of often unrelated informa-

The Secret War: The Story of International Espionage since World War II, by Sanché de Gramont. Putnam, \$5.95

The U-2 Affair, by David Wise and Thomas B. Ross. Random House, \$4.95

tion the trickiest step is that of evaluation. It is even trickier trying to evaluate books about the evaluators. The titles here under review are largely concerned with an appraisal of the merits and shortcomings not only of our own foreign espionage organization, the Central Intelligence Agency, but those of several other nations; so, when the authors indulge in what are demonstrably well-pondered judgments for praise or blame, one must bear in mind that none of them has, on the record, ever served time in "the intelligence community."

In a way this alienation is their strongest point.

All three authors are young Americans of good education (Ross and de Gramont graduated from Yale, Wise from Columbia). All three are journalists for major papers in Paris and Washington. All three are tenderly objective, as befits outsiders attempting to assess arcane matters involving "important" people. Wise's and Ross' style is so controlled as to verge on neutrality; de Gramont, who has won a Pulitzer Prize, occasionally indulges a flair for phrases; both books conclude with editorializing passages; both are, in sum, estimable examples of what appears to be today's preferred reportorial approach.

Mr. de Gramont's volume is the more ambitious. Its subtitle, indeed, is overly so, since he does not discuss all international espionage but only that practiced by the U.S.A., USSR, Great Britain, and the Germans. After "a look backward" to Henry L. Stimson's Department of State and the Okhrana of pre-revolutionary Russia, he advances to a comparison of today's KGB with our